Remarks

Claims 31-51 are currently pending in this patent application. Claims 31, 38 and 45 are independent. Claims 31, 33, 38 and 45 are currently amended. Claim 52 is canceled.

Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for setting forth a second actuator and because "the partially deployed" lacks antecedent basis. Claim 33 has been amended to depend from claim 32 rather than claim 31, thereby obviating the rejection.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 31-52 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-26 of copending U.S. Patent No. 6,709,305. Applicant hereby submits a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) to overcome the double patenting rejection.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 31, 32, 34-37, 45, 46 and 48-52 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gillmore U.S. Patent No. 3,181,823 ("Gillmore") in view of Basiliere U.S. Patent No. 5,421,757 ("Basiliere").

The present invention provides an emergency floatation system including at least one inflatable support for supporting the helicopter on water and an inflatable emergency life raft for rescuing and transporting stranded persons.

Claim 31 has been amended to recite a floatation system for a helicopter having landing skids, comprising at least one inflatable float attached to the landing skids for buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water. By contrast, Gillmore teaches an emergency floatation

system 24 that is "located on either side of the craft to give it greater stability in the water if this is deemed necessary." (Col. 4, lines 34-36). Gillmore's floatation system 24 is clearly incapable of buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water. As depicted in Figure 2 of Gillmore, floatation system 24 merely provides stability for "watertight" helicopter 10 while the helicopter is partially submerged beneath water line 42. Moreover, Gillmore's floatation system 24 is not attached to helicopter landing skids 18, 19, as currently recited in claim 31.

The Basiliere reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Gillmore. Basiliere discloses a rescue raft that includes a buoyant floor and a pair of parallel air chambers for supporting a person on water. However, Basiliere clearly does not teach a floatation system attached to a helicopter landing skid for buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water, as currently recited in claim 31.

Claim 38 has been amended to recite a floatation system attached to a helicopter, comprising a girt attached to the helicopter, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to the at least one float. As depicted in FIGS. 1 and 4, Gillmore's floatation system 24 fails to include a girt attached to a helicopter, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to at least one float. The Basiliere reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Gillmore. Specifically, Basiliere discloses a rescue raft that includes a buoyant floor and a pair of parallel air chambers, but does not teach a girt attached to a helicopter, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to at least one float, as currently recited in claim 38.

Claim 45 has been amended to recite a floatation system in combination with helicopter landing skid, comprising at least one inflatable float attached to the landing skid and an inflatable raft. As discussed hereinabove with respect to claim 31, Gillmore's floatation system 24 is not attached to helicopter landing skids 18, 19. Rather, the floats are disposed on either side of the

helicopter to provide improved stability in the water only if necessary, whereas retractable landing skids 18, 19 are disposed well below water line 42 when the helicopter is in water. Again, the Basiliere reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Gillmore. In particular, Basiliere discloses a rescue raft that includes a buoyant floor and a pair of parallel air chambers, but does not teach a floatation system attached to helicopter landing skids.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 31, 32, 34-37, 45, 46 and 48-52 are not rendered obvious by Gillmore in view of Basiliere.

The Office Action further rejects claims 31-52 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Otsuka U.S. Patent No. 5,765,778 ("Otsuka") in view of Fisher U.S. Patent No. 4,519,782 ("Fisher").

Claim 31 currently recites a floatation system for a helicopter having landing skids, comprising at least one inflatable float *attached to the landing skids for buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water (emphasis added)*. Otsuka teaches an airplane capable of an emergency landing including a plurality of expandable gas bags for partially supporting the airplane during an emergency landing. Otsuka does not disclose a floatation system for a helicopter having landing skids. Moreover, Otsuka clearly does not provide a floatation system comprising at least one inflatable float attached to helicopter landing skids for buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water.

The Fisher patent fails to cure the deficiencies of Otsuka. Fisher discloses an escape slide and life raft assembly for an airplane. However, Fisher clearly fails to provide a floatation system comprising at least one inflatable float attached to helicopter landing skids for buoyantly supporting the helicopter on water.

Claim 38 currently recites a floatation system *attached to a helicopter*, comprising a girt *attached to the helicopter*, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to the at least one float (*emphasis added*). As discussed hereinabove with respect to claim 31, Otsuka teaches an airplane capable of an emergency landing including a plurality of expandable gas bags for partially supporting the airplane during an emergency landing. Otsuka does not disclose a floatation system attached to a helicopter. Moreover, Otsuka clearly does not provide a floatation system attached to a helicopter, comprising a girt attached to the helicopter, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to the at least one float. The Fisher reference again fails to cure the deficiencies of Otsuka. Specifically, Fisher discloses an escape slide and life raft assembly for an airplane, but fails to teach a floatation system attached to a helicopter, comprising a girt attached to the helicopter, at least one float attached to the girt and a raft attached to the at least one float.

Claim 45 currently recites a floatation system *in combination with helicopter landing skid*, comprising at least one inflatable float *attached to the landing skid* and an inflatable raft (*emphasis added*). Otsuka teaches an airplane capable of an emergency landing, but fails to provide a floatation system in combination with a helicopter landing skid. Further, Otsuka clearly does not provide a floatation system comprising at least one inflatable float attached to a helicopter landing skid and an inflatable raft attached to a helicopter. Fisher reference fails to cure the deficiencies of Otsuka. In particular, Fisher fails to disclose a floatation system in combination with a helicopter landing skid, the system comprising at least one inflatable float attached to a helicopter landing skid.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 31-52 are not rendered obvious by Otsuka in view of Fisher.

Conclusion

It is believed this amendment now has placed the application in condition for consideration and allowance. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-0683 of Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps.

Respectfully submitted,

7-12-05
Date

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